

to that alliance. For some Allies, this will require higher defense spending. For all of us, it will require more effective defense spending, with each nation adding the tools and technologies to fight and win a new kind of war.

And because many threats to the NATO members come from outside of Europe, NATO forces must be organized to operate outside of Europe. When forces were needed quickly in Afghanistan, NATO's options were limited. We must build new capabilities, and we must strengthen our will to use those capabilities.

The United States proposes the creation of a NATO response force that will bring together well-equipped, highly ready air, ground, and sea forces from NATO Allies, old and new. This force will be prepared to deploy on short notice wherever it is needed. A NATO response force will take time to create, and we should begin that effort here in Prague.

Yet, security against new threats requires more than just new capabilities. Free nations must accept our shared obligations to keep the peace. The world needs the nations of this continent to be active in the defense of freedom, not inward-looking or isolated by indifference. Ignoring dangers or excusing aggression may temporarily avert conflict, but they don't bring true peace.

International stability must be actively defended, and all nations that benefit from that stability have a duty to help. In this noble work, America and the strong democracies of Europe need each other, each playing our full and responsible role. The good we can do together is far greater than the good we can do apart.

Great evil is stirring in the world. Many of the young here are coming up in a different world, different era, a different time, a different series of threats. We face perils we've never thought about, perils we've never seen before. But they're dangerous. They're just as dangerous as those perils that your fathers and mothers and grandfathers and grandmothers faced.

The hopes of all mankind depend on the courage and the unity of great democracies. In this hour of challenge, NATO will do what

it has done before: We will stand firm against the enemies of freedom, and we'll prevail.

The transatlantic ties of Europe and America have met every test of history, and we intend to again. U-boats could not divide us. The threats and standoffs of the cold war did not make us weary. The commitment of my Nation to Europe is found in the carefully tended graves of young Americans who died for this continent's freedom. That commitment is shown by the thousands in uniforms still serving here, from the Balkans to Bavaria, still willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for this continent's future.

For 100 years, place names of Europe have often stood for conflict and tragedy and loss. Single words evoke sad and bitter experience: Verdun, Munich, Stalingrad, Dresden, Nuremberg, and Yalta. We have no power to rewrite history. We do have the power to write a different story for our time.

When future generations look back at this moment and speak of Prague and what we did here, that name will stand for hope. In Prague, young democracies will gain new security; a grand alliance will gather its strength and find new purpose. And America and Europe will renew the historic friendship that still keeps the peace of the world.

Thank you for your interest. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. at the Hilton Prague. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Military Academy cadet Gedrimas "Jimmy" Jaglinskis, who introduced the President; Alan Lee Williams, chairman, and Antonio Borges Carvalho, secretary general, Atlantic Treaty Association; Karen Frist, wife of Senator Bill Frist; Janet Voinovich, wife of Senator George V. Voinovich; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Interview With Russia's NTV

November 18, 2002

Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, did the October hostage crisis in Moscow change the U.S. position on Chechnya?

The President. No, our position on Chechnya is, we hope this can get solved peacefully, that this is an issue within Russia,

and that I will continue to work with Vladimir Putin as best as I can to encourage him for there to be a peaceful resolution with the Chechnyan issue, the larger issue.

On the other hand, I recognize that anytime terrorists come to take life, a leader must step forward. And the fact that 800 citizens could have been killed by terrorists put my friend Vladimir Putin in a very difficult situation. And he handled it as best he could. He did what he had to do to save life. And people—I heard somebody the other day blame Russia. No, the people to blame are the terrorists. They need to be held account. I believe you can do both. I believe you can hold terrorists to account, killers to account, and at the same time solve difficult situations in a peaceful way.

Former President Aslan Maskhadov of Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, you say the leader has to come forward. So President Putin said that the leader of the Chechen group that took hostages, he was linked with former President Maskhadov of Chechnya, and that actually Maskhadov was aware of it. And therefore, President Putin said Maskhadov is an international terrorist.

The President. Well, I haven't had a chance to talk to Vladimir Putin about these connections. But I am aware of the fact that there are killers moving around the world interested in holding people hostage, Governments hostage, and that we must work together to bring people to justice. It's one of the reasons why I'm working very closely with the Georgians, and I'm pleased to see Vladimir Putin is working with Mr. Shevardnadze to come up with a common strategy to route out the killers, the Al-Qaida-type killers, which may be hiding in the Pankisi Gorge with one thing in mind, to bring instability to Russia. And so we're working together as best as we possibly can to bring people to justice.

Q. But in the West people very often, in the United States in particular, say that one of the partners is Mr. Maskhadov in that political solution. After the October crisis, is that still an issue?

The President. Well, I haven't had a chance to talk to Vladimir and see the facts

that he's talking about. He obviously knows—you know, has got some information that we can talk about in St. Petersburg, and I look forward to discussing it with him.

Pankisi Gorge Terrorists/Russia-U.S. Cooperation in the War on Terror

Q. Well, Mr. President, you mentioned Georgia. President Putin immediately after the October crisis said that, from now on Russia is going to hit every terrorist target wherever it is; that means even abroad. Is that all right?

The President. Well, it depends on what you mean by "hit every target"—depending abroad. I mean, you know, I think what he's saying is, we're going to redouble our efforts to work together to bring people to justice. And that's what we're doing in Georgia. I have told Mr. Shevardnadze that if—you know, it's very important for him to be collaborative and to be prepared to bring people to justice if there are killers hiding in the Pankisi Gorge with the intent upon bringing—wreaking havoc in Russia or anywhere else, for that matter. They must be brought to justice. And slowly but surely, we're finding these people around the world.

This is a different kind of war, see; that's what's unique. In the old days, we would fight armies that had tanks and airplanes and ships. These people are the kind of people that hide in caves and send people to their suicidal deaths. And so it requires a different kind of effort. It requires sharing of intelligence, cutting off money, having specially trained troops to go into dark caves or the dark corners of the world and bring these people to justice. You speak in the language of the old war. This is a war that requires a precise understanding of where these people hide, and the willingness to discuss intelligence like we've never discussed before to hunt them down.

And that's what we're doing with Russia. I mean, our intelligence sharing is much better than it ever has been before. And it's going to be good for both our peoples. And I keep reminding the American people that Russia is our friend and we're working in collaboration to hunt down those who would kind of hide in the shadowy corners and bring them to justice.

Russian Interests in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, one question on Iraq—

The President. Sure.

Q. —which is now very sort of hot issue. If push comes to shove and a military solution is necessary, and if the current regime, Saddam Hussein's regime, is going to be toppled, are Russian economic interests going to be considered?

The President. Well, first, I hope that all the ifs don't happen. I mean, I hope that Mr. Saddam Hussein disarms, like he said he would do. But the problem is, he said he would do it for 11 years, and he hasn't done anything for 11 years. I mean, in the name of peace he should disarm. And so we're working with Russia and other members of the United Nations Security Council to send a clear message to Mr. Saddam Hussein that we expect you to disarm.

If he doesn't disarm, then we'll disarm him in the name of peace. And of course, we'll be interested in all interests. We have no desire to run the show, to run the country. We will work to encourage the development of new leadership, should this happen, that will recognize the rights of all citizens that live in this country, that will keep the territorial integrity of Iraq intact. And we understand Russia has got interests there, as do other countries. And of course, those interests will be honored.

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. I'm glad you're here.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 1:25 p.m. in the Library at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia; President Eduard Shevardnadze of the Republic of Georgia; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The transcript of this interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 21. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With LNK TV of Lithuania

November 18, 2002

President's Upcoming Visit to Lithuania

Q. Mr. President, you are the first President of the United States to visit Lithuania. What is your message to Lithuania's people?

The President. Well, first, I'm honored to be invited. Secondly, I'm really looking forward to it. And my message is: You're free. Freedom is precious, and we welcome our friends the Lithuanians into the—as a free nation into the brotherhood of nations.

I'll also say to the world that the Baltic countries know what it means to live under fear and the lack of freedom, and to have these countries be allied with the United States and other nations is important to our soul. It's important to have that sense of freedom as a source of vigor and strength, and a very important alliance. That's what I want to say.

War on Terror

Q. What are America and Lithuania going to do after the Prague, together?

The President. Well, we're going to work to fight terror. That's the new threat we face. It's most evident here in America because we've been under attack, and we're still under attack. People still want to hurt us because of what we stand for. But countries which love freedom are not immune from these people. These are coldblooded killers, and we've got a charge to keep for a long time coming. And the best way to do that is work together.

So the NATO mission is one of defending freedom by fighting against those who would try to defeat freedom, which means we've got to share intelligence, work together militarily in a way that complements everybody, cut off the money of the terrorists. I mean, there's a lot to do. But that's the true threat that we face.

Russia is no longer a threat. After Prague, I'm going to Russia. And I'm going to say to the Russian people, "You shouldn't fear